

# MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 65, No. 8 February 23, 2023 \$1

Mi pueblo ha resistido 10 Prepárense para la mayor crisis capitalista 12



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## Earthquake kills 50,000

# End sanctions on Syria!

By Ted Kelly

On Feb. 18, Israeli occupation forces occupying the Syrian Golan region launched missiles at the Syrian capital of Damascus and its surrounding suburbs. At the time of this writing, five people were killed and 15 wounded in this attack. This unprovoked assault on the civilian population and infrastructure of Syria is the second such Israeli missile attack in 2023. The Israelis have launched almost 100 air strikes against Syria since 2020. Meanwhile, ISIS has taken credit for a raid that killed 61 civilians and 7 Syrian Arab Army soldiers in al-Hasakha, a large, multi-national region in northeastern Syria, currently occupied in part by the U.S. and its proxies.

The terrible earthquake that hit a wide area of southeastern Türkiye and neighboring Syria has reportedly killed at least 46,000 people as of Feb. 20, with the total reaching 50,000 since then. This winter the survivors who lost their housing face freezing and wet conditions, without any alternative shelter, without any electricity, without any heating and with inadequate access to food.

While the devastation has taken place in both countries, and Türkiye faces enormous difficulties delivering aid, it does not face the economic warfare that the U.S. and its NATO allies have directed at Syria for over a decade. Even in the midst of this humanitarian crisis, Washington has ordered a halt to any delivery of financial aid to the legitimate government of Syria.



In Aleppo, Syria's largest city, the ancient citadel was destroyed by the February 2023 earthquake.

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International cargo planes cannot land in Syria; international agencies are blocked. Crowdfunding services, donations and even individual assistance is blocked. In this dire emergency situation, the U.S. has persisted in keeping the sanctions in place and blocked all forms of emergency relief.

Millions of people in the United States are sympathetic with those suffering from this catastrophe. They should be aware, however, of the role of U.S. imperialism, which has demonized and targeted the legitimate Syrian government. After over a decade of war with U.S.- and NATO-backed proxies, the Syrian people should have been poised to finally begin the costly process of rebuilding their country.

The landslide reelection of President Bashar al-Assad's

National Progressive Front and the historic new agreement between the Syrian Arab Republic and the People's Republic of China, to induct the country into the Belt and Road Initiative in recent years, both seemed to mark the start of a new chapter for all Syrian peoples.

However, the draconian sanctions imposed on them by the United States have blocked the resources necessary to rebuild. U.S. troops continue to occupy Syria's principal oil-producing regions. Washington's theft of Syrian oil and gas resources is exacerbating the economic situation. The U.S. has plundered more than 80% of Syria's oil production and smuggled and burned Syria's grain stock.

Ongoing military strikes by both the U.S. and Israel, combined with these harsh economic sanctions, have caused immeasurable civilian casualties and taken away the means of subsistence for the Syrians. U.S. sanctions on other countries in the region — Lebanon, Iraq and Iran — are a further impediment to getting aid to Syria. All this has made Syria's humanitarian crisis even worse.

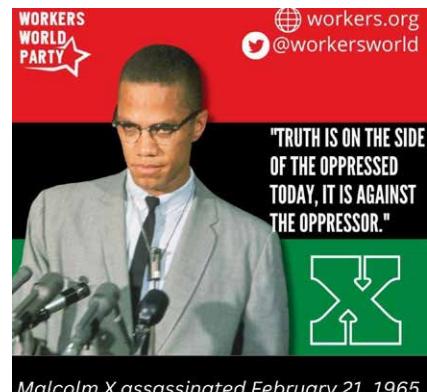
To bring the truth on the ground to Workers World's readers, this reporter spoke on Feb. 12 with **Paul Larudee** of the **Syrian Support Movement**, which has been organizing aid for the Syrian people.

### Over a decade of war against Syrians

**Paul Larudee:** Our movement was fortunate enough to meet several Syrians who helped us to form a humanitarian aid program, in addition to the human rights

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## Black History Month 5



Malcolm X assassinated February 21, 1965

**National oppression is not secondary!**

**Black Reconstruction in S. Carolina**

## Roll the union on!

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**TEXAS PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE**



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Oakland, Calif., Feb. 16, 2023 PHOTO: LABOR MEDIA

## Train wreck exposes capitalism

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# Honor Black History Month!

## Support WW!

Workers World newspaper commemorates Black History Month because white supremacy pervades life under capitalism. Every struggle — from fighting for living-wage jobs and health care to ending murderous police terror, from winning affordable housing to defending the basic right to vote — is rooted in the centuries-long battle to end this country's horrific history of racism.

We are still dealing with the legacy of enslavement — that heinous violence-driven form of superexploitation that reemerged in new forms with the demise of Black Reconstruction. That's why every month, not just February, this newspaper chronicles the struggles of peoples of African descent and their allies to eradicate institutionalized, systemic white supremacy in every sphere.

A case in point is our continuing coverage of the movements to free political prisoners — like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ruchell Magee and Imam Jamil Al-Amin — and to honor the legacies of trailblazing Black women such as Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer.

WW bases our weekly coverage of the Black struggle here and elsewhere in the African diaspora on breaking imperialist chains and promoting the principles of self-determination and sovereignty. Oppressed nationalities have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality, injustice and white supremacy — by any means necessary!

### WW needs your support!

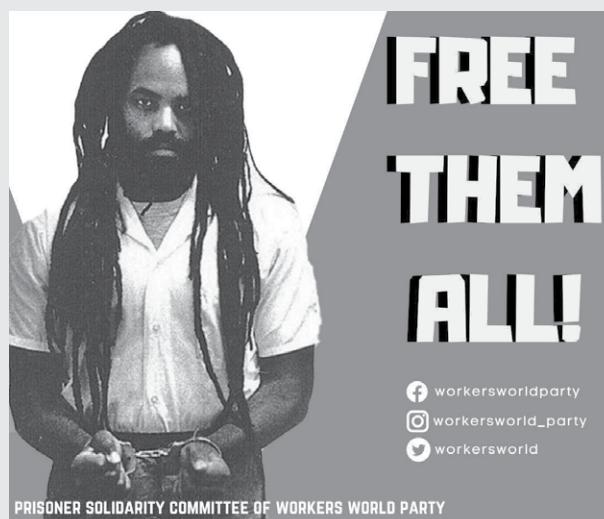
If you appreciate our coverage, it's time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. WW depends on its readers' backing. The program was established 46 years ago to help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight against capitalist exploitation and for revolutionary change.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has sponsored workers.org, where articles containing news and analysis of global and domestic issues and struggles are posted

continually. The website is a resource for political activists. It contains firsthand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, translated by our staff.

Timely articles by worker-organizers keep the newspaper current on unionization drives, along with reports on anti-racist and other progressive movements.

While WW's staff is voluntary, the 12 printed issues each year and the website do incur expenses. Although many online publications require payments to read their articles, WW does not. **Our articles are free to all readers.**



**Join the WW Supporter Program:** Can you donate \$50, \$100, \$200 a year or more? Donating \$50 or more will entitle you to receive 12 print issues a year, an email link to every article posted online and upon request, a copy of the book "What road to socialism?"

By donating to this fund, you can help get class truth to more readers. Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World. Mail them with your name, address and email to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011.

We are thankful for your support in building Workers World. □

# MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and

worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

### If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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# Tesla workers mobilize for a union, company responds with mass firing

By Arjae Red  
Buffalo, New York

Tesla workers in the Lackawanna plant near Buffalo launched a campaign for a union on Feb. 14. They seek to be represented by Workers United —the same union that successfully organized the first recognized Starbucks union in the U.S., also in Buffalo. Starbucks Workers United is now nearly 300 stores strong.

Tesla workers on the organizing committee and Workers United members from other companies such as Starbucks leafleted outside the plant on Valentine's Day; they handed out union-themed valentines with a digital link to sign a union card on the back. Many workers were receptive to the cards, some expressing excitement that a union is finally coming to Tesla.

It wasn't long after the union effort went public that union busting began. It started with the shadow-banning of the union's twitter page: @united\_tesla. Tesla CEO Elon Musk is now the owner of Twitter, so this comes as no surprise. Just as the company has shut down some normal avenues of communication within the workplace, Tesla is making it harder for workers to garner support from the public via social media.

Even worse, the day after the union was announced, Tesla fired around 30 workers, and more firings followed the next day. The total number of workers fired is upwards of 40, according to the workers that Workers World spoke with. The company claims these firings were part of a "routine performance review" and were decided the previous week before the union effort was announced.

Many workers think this is a convenient



Members of Tesla Workers United organizing committee leaflet the Tesla plant in Buffalo, alongside Starbucks organizers on Valentine's Day.  
PHOTO: RICHARD BENINGER

lie, due to the fact that the performance reviews happen every six months, with the next one not expected until around March. A number of them recall review results usually coming in late, so for them to come in early is unusual and suspicious. Workers noted the number of workers fired was much higher this time than after previous performance reviews.

#### Tesla's intimidation tactics

Workers World newspaper interviewed Al Celli, one of the organizers in the autopilot/tech department, who gave a chilling firsthand account of the firings: "When someone would get fired, they would send management in and tap them on the shoulder. They brought out a box and told them to clear their stuff off the desk. They also got their Tesla accounts immediately shut down, so they couldn't be contacted."

When Celli saw a close friend and co-worker approached by management, they asked if they were being fired.

Management would not even look them in the eye, just nodded their head "yes." Celli said, "Some workers even met with their supervisors beforehand and asked if they were going to be fired; they were told no and then fired anyway."

Tesla has cultivated a dehumanizing atmosphere of fear and anxiety, leaving workers upset after seeing others fired right before their eyes, wondering if they're to be next. On top of this, workers are forced to continue working through the stressful incident or risk working too slowly and falling short of their performance quotas, which could place them next on the chopping block.

Workers in the union's organizing committee confirm that a handful of workers fired were committee members. Tesla is likely firing large swathes of workers and not exclusively organizing leaders, which provides the company cover—an excuse to claim that Tesla isn't discriminating based on union activity, while still being able to strike fear into the workers.

Firing workers who aren't necessarily union supporters doesn't make this any less an act of union busting; and if anything, it reinforces the desire many have for a union. "Many people said if they didn't support the union before, then they sure do now, because their jobs are on the line every single day. Fear of 'at-will' employment has really settled in, because now people understand what that really means," Celli explained.

Workers United has filed Unfair Labor Practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board over the firings.

In addition to the mass firings, Tesla took a page out of the Starbucks playbook and brought in human resources staff from California to surveil the workplace. It is clear that huge multinational capitalist enterprises work together, when it comes to crushing their workers. This is all the more reason for workers to unite across industrial and national lines and work against their common oppressors.

The Tesla organizing committee has received widespread support from Workers United members across the city, as well as other unions and working-class organizations. Workers World Party's Buffalo branch donated a few dozen high-visibility reflective vests for workers to use during their Valentine's Day leafleting action. "Overwhelming support from the outside has really lifted the spirits at Tesla," Celli said. "The best way to support [us] is to follow the social media. Share the workers' voices, and let people know about what's going on."

*Follow Tesla Workers United:  
twitter: @united\_tesla  
instagram: teslaworkersunited.*

# After toxic train wreck, residents demand answers

By Otis Grotewohl

Weeks after the disaster, more terrifying information is coming out about the toxic train derailment Feb. 3 in East Palestine, Ohio. The two-mile-long, 150-car train, owned by Norfolk Southern, weighed 18,000 tons and was carrying hazardous material when it jackknifed as a result of a broken axle.

Following the "controlled release" of the dangerous gases on Feb. 6, which produced a mushroom cloud of poisonous smoke, the public was informed there were more chemicals released than originally revealed. At first, people were only told about vinyl chloride, which is clinically proven to cause cancer. When vinyl chloride combusts, it turns into phosgene, a gas that was used as a weapon during the first imperialist world war.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency later stated that additional hazardous materials were released into the air, including ethylhexyl acrylate, isobutylene and ethylene glycol monobutyl ether, all of which can cause health complications. (Allegheny Front, Feb. 13) Cars carrying these chemicals were marked "nonhazardous."

Residents in and around East Palestine have publicly reported having respiratory issues, sore throats, headaches, bloodshot eyes and skin rashes, and they complain that the air smells like burning plastic. There have been alarming accounts of dead wildlife, including fish and birds, as well as farm animals and even family pets.

Meanwhile, people are being told by state and EPA officials that the air and water are "safe," according to their "tests," but local residents don't trust these tests.

Many residents of the town are afraid to be in their own homes, but they have nowhere else to go.

People from the community packed a local high school gymnasium Feb. 15 to attend what they thought would be a meeting with Norfolk Southern representatives, where they could ask questions. The company backed out at the last minute and sent an email that read, "After consulting with community leaders, we have become increasingly concerned about the growing physical threat to our employees and members of the community around this event, stemming from the increasing likelihood of the participation of outside parties." (Reuters, Feb. 15).

The company's failure to show up sent a clear message that they don't care about the well-being of anyone in that community. Company representatives eventually met with local government officials but still refuse to meet with the people most impacted.

In a disgraceful attempt to save face and prevent lawsuits, Norfolk Southern bosses have offered people from the evacuation zone a measly \$1,000 each as "inconvenience" pay. Residents are being advised by local attorneys not to accept the money, as it could jeopardize future lawsuits. The small amount of chump change Norfolk Southern calls "inconvenience" pay is not enough to cover the hospital bills that

will be forced upon many East Palestine residents in years to come, let alone even enough to cover long-term evacuation needs.

#### Uncertain consequences beyond East Palestine

East Palestine borders western Pennsylvania along the Ohio River and is a stone's throw from West Virginia. Residents of several states in the Ohio River Basin, including Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky, rely on drinking water from the Ohio River, which flows south of East Palestine.

There were low levels of industrial chemicals reported in the Ohio River, 300 miles north of Cincinnati, not long after the accident. A river plume of butyl acrylate was found near Gallipolis, Ohio, a small river community 225 miles south of East Palestine. (WLWT-5, Feb. 16) This discovery prompted residents there and on the West Virginia side to try to find alternative sources of water.

Residents of Wheeling and Moundsville, West Virginia, posted pictures of discoloration of the Ohio River on social media. Some individuals have taken video footage of themselves raking sticks in creeks to show how the chemicals form an oily, rainbow-colored film in the water.

Many people who live along the Ohio River — a river lined with coal, chemical and ethane cracker plants — are not surprised that such a disaster occurred, knowing of the combination of the poor infrastructure and deliberately weakened



East Palestine, Ohio, after "controlled release" of chemicals housed in train cars involved in derailment Feb. 3, 2023.

regulation of the railroad industry.

In response to the U.S. government's slow, and callous reaction, activists in the Ohio Valley have formed a progressive, multinational coalition known as River Valley Organizing. The organization started on social media and has organized community-based teach-ins, informational pickets and bottled water distributions alongside the Ohio River and will be conducting independent tests, according to their Facebook page.

Workers World spoke with Rich Olivito, an RVO supporter and longtime anti-racist activist from Steubenville, Ohio, who said, "There is a long history of Ohio River communities, on both sides of the river, being subjected to extreme negligence

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# Sam Marcy: An apostle of revolutionary class unity

By Larry Holmes

*Based on a talk given at the Feb. 5 webinar “Global Class War: Lessons from Sam Marcy for workers struggles today.” Go to [youtu.be/5Arb33Q8SNo](https://youtu.be/5Arb33Q8SNo) to view the webinar. Holmes is WWP’s First Secretary.*

Comrade Sam Marcy put forth his Global Class War thesis 70 years ago — that's quite a period of time. At that time, Comrade Sam was still in the Socialist Workers Party. And he was trying to show the leaders and the ranks of the SWP that there was a new situation for the global class struggle.

It had its contradictions. It had its strengths and its weaknesses. First, he underscored the strengths, on the heels of this tremendous earthshaking Chinese Revolution — a game changer — and the Korean War of liberation, a stronger Soviet Union, made so by surviving and prevailing in the second imperialist war designed to destroy it. Much of Europe was liberated as a result of the outcome of the Second World War. And of course, there were the tremendous liberation struggles in what's now come to be known as the Global South.

That was the strength. In general the weaknesses of the time were in the centers of imperialism in Europe and to a large extent here in the United States — Sam was very clear about this. I think it's probably the most important part of his global war thesis: the need for the class struggle on a global basis to be realized and embraced and owned consciously by everyone.

Sam believed it would be necessary, at the soonest possible time, for the revolutionary energy and fervor that was, so far, in the East and the most oppressed parts of the world, for that to move, not leave the East, but move into the imperialist centers, particularly in the United States.

In his 1953 document, Sam called this “The Missing Link.” That is the awakening of the U.S. working class, this powerful sleeping giant, and it understanding that what it does, what it's prepared to do, is not only immediately decisive for struggles here in the United States, but because it's the working class at the center of world imperialism, it is decisive for the entire world.

This was the special role that the

workers and the oppressed of this country needed to live up to. They haven't done it yet, but things are starting, as we see in all these tremendous organizing drives led by young workers of all kinds.

## The critical link in the chain

There are many things about Sam's document that have changed over 70 years, because change is the order of life. Everything changes but not this point, the point about the link, the critical link in the chain being the awakening and the embracing of the struggle by the workers in this country.

Sam died 25 years ago, and that's a good excuse to review Sam's main contributions. In my opinion, time has made Sam's contributions even clearer and more important than they were at the time of his death.

You can describe Marcy's legacy in a lot of ways — the reviving and the rebuilding of the revolutionary forces but also the reviving of a worldwide working-class movement — a revolutionary movement that has a world socialist revolution perspective.

This was the perspective of the October Revolution: the perspective that the various detachments of the working class, while they may be geographically separated and separated by a lot of things, they are still together and they are still dependent on each other. That was true then. That was true in 1917, and it's all the more true now.

Today, we define the working class, its strengths and its weaknesses, very differently than the working class that Sam was describing 70 years ago. It's changed in many, many ways, because of the vast changes that are constantly taking place because of technology.

The global working class is far more centralized in many ways, far more together. This is not a good thing for the capitalist economy, and the working class is far more aware of itself because of communications technology. And there are all the other reasons that it's becoming more revolutionary and more united.

## An apostle of revolutionary class unity

Sam was not interested in politicizing against our opponents in the movement for the sake of polemics. He was much more interested in what new ground could be broken among revolutionary forces,

forces dedicated to socialist revolution and in the struggle, particularly the most oppressed workers.

What can be done to bring these forces together? Not to put aside differences but to understand that we're working toward a higher level of unity. This is what Sam was dedicated to. I don't think there's anything more central to his legacy than this. Sam always wanted to know what's going on amongst the most oppressed, the most oppressed sections of our class. He wanted to know the situation, because he felt that the working class's ability to understand this and to intervene in it was decisive for the oppressed and for the goal of world socialist revolution.

Sam saw that a lot of the problems of the working class, the fragmentation, the backwardness, the sectarianism, to a large extent stemmed from years, sometimes decades, of setbacks and defeats. But we should not be weary. As a matter of fact, revolutionaries should be strengthened by the challenge of overcoming these problems, overcoming the fragmentation.

Sam was an apostle of revolutionary class unity one way or another. I think that's a big part of this legacy.

Back in the time he wrote this document, the Global Class War, he was also fighting his comrades inside the SWP. He wanted them to be on the picket lines at the court hearings of the leaders of the Communist Party of the United States, who were being tried during the McCarthy era and threatened with jail.

Many of them spent many, many years in jail. A few of them died in jail. He wanted the SWP to be stronger in coming out in defense of the Rosenbergs. And why not? And to get over what he called the differences, that as important as they might be, should not be barriers to showing this kind of solidarity.

## A true role model

Sam was a human being, and as such, like all humans, he had his contradictions. We all do. But I'll tell you, you could never find a better role model for a revolutionary than Sam Marcy. He despised sectarianism, he despised chauvinism and all forms of bigotry. His biggest principle was to always put what was in the interest of the working class first.

If you're arguing a point, if you're



Larry Holmes at Feb. 20, 2021 rally for Amazon Bessemer workers in New York City.

arguing with comrades, if you're arguing with opponents, never let your ego and your anger be the decisive thing in the decisions that you make. Make what is in the best interest of the working class the basis for the decisions that you make.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Comrade Sam and Workers World Party were invited to a meeting in 1993 in Brussels of forces around the world, and particularly in Europe, who remained revolutionary. Sam wrote a short but brilliant document for that Brussels conference, where he called upon everyone there, in spite of their different histories, in spite of whether they call themselves Stalinist or Trotskyist or whatever, Maoist, to unite around a Leninist revolutionary basis — even though it was a very heavy time of big setbacks, the biggest setback imaginable. It was also time for us to become revolutionary.

Sam saw the necessity of reforming the revolutionary vanguard and advised us accordingly. Be politically strong and mature in how you carry out the struggle, and this will enable you to bring others together. Now that we're in the midst of a multiplying world crisis with all sorts of new crises, the economy, the Ukraine war — I'm sure that Comrade Sara is probably going to speak her mind about the Pentagon shooting down a Chinese balloon and how significant that is — the important thing, comrades, is that we begin this year inspired by Sam's record, to reacquaint ourselves with everything that made Sam the revolutionary that he was.

Sam was unique in so many ways. He always grasped the lessons of the past. He lived mostly in the future, because you have to as a revolutionary. He was always looking forward. His eyes were always on the prize. And that was the world socialist revolution. □

# After toxic train wreck, residents demand answers

Continued from page 3

when it comes to exposing the citizens to seriously toxic and highly carcinogenic substances. Our valley and region has also been the subject of a 30-year Harvard University cancer cluster study, which some local physicians have referenced publicly.”

## Capitalism is ultimately responsible

One week after the catastrophe in East Palestine, another Norfolk Southern train derailed in southeast Michigan, where 30 train cars fell off the track. Fortunately, there were no reported injuries or hazardous materials involved, but many people are now skeptical, as a result of the blatantly dishonest response by the company to the Feb. 3 derailment.

Union railroad workers, particularly members of Railroad Workers United, blame the company's reduction in staff and safety inspections for the accident. Until six years ago, there was a requirement for trains carrying hazardous flammable materials to have Electronically Controlled Pneumatic brakes, to help

prevent crashes. In 2017, the Trump administration lifted ECP requirements, and President Joe Biden's administration has continued the same deregulation policies as his predecessor.

Biden's pro-company bias became apparent when, a few months ago, the administration sided with the railroad industry against union demands for safe staffing and paid sick days in their union contracts.

Railroad workers are not the only people who blame profit-driven deregulation for recent derailments. Steven Ditmeyer, a former top official at the Federal Railroad Administration, shared his thoughts on the derailment in East Palestine with the investigative news outlet The Lever. “Would ECP brakes have reduced the severity of this accident? Yes,” Ditmeyer said. (Newsweek, Feb. 14)

Some would argue the Norfolk Southern train that wrecked in East Palestine was unfit for travel when it left Madison, Illinois, on the evening of Feb. 1. Footage taken by a security camera from an equipment plant in Salem, Ohio, 20 miles outside East Palestine, showed sparks and

flames under one of the train cars as it passed the plant. (cbsnews.com, Feb. 13)

Sarah Feinberg, who served as administrator of the FRA from 2015 to 2017, blames deregulation, in particular the scheme of “Precision Scheduled Railroading” for the recent derailments. PSR has been widely adopted across the railroad industry and is intended to “increase efficiency” and “reduce costs,” i.e., help the railroad magnates rake in huge profits.

In a recent interview Feinberg indicated, “When I was FRA administrator, I was not happy with the lengths of the trains, and they were 80 or 90 cars long. This train was 50% longer.” (cbsnews.com, Feb. 17) Feinberg's honest assessment helps explain why there are more train accidents than years before.

Capitalism is a system driven by the profit motive, and until it is replaced, the likelihood of safety regulations being reintroduced is doubtful. Many RWU and rail union members and many others in the labor movement have been putting forth the bold demand to “nationalize the railroads.”

People in East Palestine and along the

Ohio River are witnessing the cruelty of capitalism firsthand. They are turning to organizations like RWU and RVO for answers and assistance, because they justifiably feel like they have been abandoned by the government and lied to by the media.

The people of the Ohio River Valley have more in common with the people of Türkiye and Syria, who are facing a severe crisis from the recent 7.8 earthquake, than they do with any representative of either the Biden or Trump administrations. Workers are realizing that billions are being wasted to prolong a proxy war against Russia, but it took nearly two weeks before the U.S. government even addressed the Feb. 3 derailment.

U.S. capitalism is responsible for the accident, along with all of the consequences for years to come.

*The author grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, and has spent seven years as a labor representative in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Both communities are geographically close to East Palestine.*

# Class oppression is primary; national oppression is not secondary!

By Monica Moorehead

*Based on a talk given at the Feb. 5 webinar “Global Class War: Lessons from Sam Marcy for workers struggles today.” Go to [youtu.be/5Arb33Q8SN0](https://youtu.be/5Arb33Q8SN0) to view the webinar.*

Comrades and friends, Sam Marcy made the following quote at the end of his 1984 article “Black nationalism and white chauvinism: Marxism and national oppression”:

“We promote and must propagate the right to self-determination, but which road to take for liberation must be decided by the oppressed nation itself. A revolutionary working-class party promotes class solidarity irrespective of which option an oppressed nation chooses.

“The neutrality of the party in this respect is the strongest pillar of working-class multinational solidarity in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. The bourgeoisie denies and closes the road to both separatism and integration. They neither wish to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution for political equality nor allow social and economic equality. Nor will they permit the development of a movement for an independent separate state.”

Sam defended the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who allied himself with former leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, when Jackson was running for president on the Democratic Party ticket in 1984. Jackson came under vicious attack for accepting Farrakhan’s endorsement.

Both Farrakhan and Jackson were labeled as being anti-Semitic by the ruling class to drive an artificial wedge between Black and Jewish people. These individual attacks were a smokescreen for attacking the NOI, a Black Muslim mass organization, founded on the principle of separation in response to racist state repression.

This is an example of self-determination that all revolutionaries and communists should defend, regardless of agreement or not of one’s program, to demand any formal equality denied systematically by the powers that be.

#### Jackson campaign raised form vs. content

Workers World Party consciously supported the Jackson campaign but not because of his program, which was bourgeois in its political orientation. The Jackson campaign was a mass, grassroots movement that threatened the racist leadership of the Democratic National Committee and had the potential of empowering the disenfranchised Black base to move in a more independent, revolutionary direction.

To quote a Dec. 8, 1983, WW article, “Why we support the Jackson campaign”: “Jesse Jackson’s candidacy represents an upsurge in the Black struggle and has taken on an electoral, that is, parliamentary, form. Our program, on the other hand, calls for the relentless prosecution of the class struggle with the purpose of overturning the capitalist system with all its repressive forces.

“Our Party will continue to relentlessly expose both the Democratic and Republican parties as part and parcel of this struggle against capitalism. However, we recognize that Jackson at this moment expresses the aspirations and the movement for democratic rights of Black people. It is the duty of all progressives, but especially of white workers, not to obstruct the use of these rights but to



WW PHOTO

facilitate it.”

During Jackson’s second presidential run in 1988, Workers World Party helped to initiate Labor for Jackson’s outreach to win white workers to an anti-racist perspective and build critical Black and white anti-racist solidarity beyond the elections.

#### White-chauvinist attacks on Rep. Omar

Fast forward almost 40 years later and Sam’s words still ring true. Just a few days ago, one of two Muslim women representatives in Congress was ousted by the Republican-led House of Representatives from the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee, accusing her of being “anti-Semitic.” This is the same representative, Somali-born Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), who was attacked, along with three other women of color representatives, during the Trump administration.

It is less controversial to defend Black people when they are being fatally shot

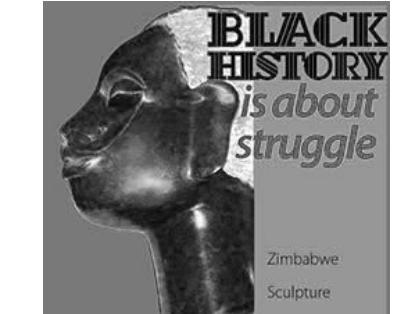
by police or white vigilantes; but when it is an individual whose position lies within a reactionary institution such as the Democratic Party, there is more gray area because of the unfortunate white-chauvinist views regarding nationalism of the oppressed on the part of leftists.

Whether resistance to national oppression has expressed itself in bourgeois or revolutionary forms, self-determination has to be consistently defended when it comes under attack by our class enemies. And those forms take on an international character.

Rep. Omar is a bourgeois politician, who happens to be of Somali origin, and that in itself cannot be ignored. Besides being African and a woman, the underlying reason why she was ousted from this horrible committee is because she implicitly criticized the U.S. government’s condoning of Israeli massacres of Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories.

The ruling class scapegoats anyone who threatens their world hegemony, especially as its military garrison state of Israel becomes more isolated. When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. opposed U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam, instead of just sticking to civil rights, the ruling class decided to permanently silence him.

Understanding the national question and the right to self-determination goes beyond defending an individual like Rep. Omar against right-wing attacks; it is



Zimbabwe  
Sculpture

about defending the most oppressed within our class because of divide-and-conquer white supremacy.

It’s about defending the Palestinian people, Black people, Latinx people, Indigenous people and other oppressed nationalities, who have suffered as whole nations from profit-hungry capitalist genocidal practices when sovereignty is at stake.

So to defend Ilhan Omar is not equal to defending the Democratic Party, the other pro-big business, pro-war party, but has to be extended to defending Palestinian, migrants and other oppressed peoples’ right to self-determination in order to forge working-class unity to prosecute the class struggle.

To end with Sam again: “The whole struggle of the working class, as well as the oppressed people and their allies everywhere, is to recognize that there can be no real independence, freedom or equality, as long as the monstrous system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression remains. The struggle for any and all concessions must and will go on, and each concession won is a building block in the struggle for emancipation from imperialist finance capital.”

Class oppression is primary; national oppression is not secondary! Long Live Proletarian Solidarity! □

## Black Reconstruction on Carolina’s Gold Coast

By Jim McMahan

The March to the Sea, which began in Atlanta in November 1864, was pivotal in the Civil War in crushing the Southern slaveocracy’s plantation system. At the march’s conclusion the following month, 60,000 mostly Black Union Army soldiers, along with an equal number of newly emancipated Black people and war refugees, arrived in Savannah, Georgia. All those who had marched 275 miles across Georgia had destroyed by root and branch the plantation system in the state.

In January 1865, the Savannah Colloquy was held, at which representatives of the city’s Black community answered questions about their future from Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and Union General William T. Sherman. Garrison Frazier, a minister who was formerly enslaved, explained: “The best way we can take care of ourselves is to have land and turn it and till it by our labor — and we can soon maintain ourselves and have something to spare.”

During the same month, Gen. Sherman issued Field Order 15, setting aside the southeastern coast from Charleston, South Carolina, across coastal Georgia to the Saint Johns River in northern Florida and for 30 miles inland, including the Sea Islands, for the exclusive settlement of newly emancipated Black people. This region was placed under a Black-run government. It was settled by 40,000 Black people, who each received 40 acres of farmland.

These momentous events opened

up the demand for land as reparations to Black people for hundreds of years of enslavement and discrimination. Today, reparations are still owed to Black people for the past years of enslavement and continuing racist discrimination in all areas of economic, social and political life.

Most of the land which Black workers gained during Reconstruction was eventually taken away by former plantation owners. The historical claim for reparations, as yet unfulfilled, still runs through the current struggles and organizing for justice by Black people.

#### Marx’s solidarity with fight for freedom

On Nov. 29, 1864, a solidarity address was sent to the National Labor Union in the U.S. by the newly organized First International (International Workingmen’s Association). The statement, written by Karl Marx, pointed to the role of the British working class in preventing England from entering the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy.

Marx wrote that the successful war “against slavery has indeed inaugurated a new era in the annals of the working class.” A new contingent of 4 million emancipated Black workers was now in struggle, joining the international working class!

Perhaps the most advanced location of this unfolding revolution was in the South Carolina Lowcountry, then known as “Carolina’s Gold Coast,” and the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. It was greatly aided by the participation of Black troops. Labor

in the disease-infested swamps of the Lowcountry was “simple drudgery in its meanest form,” done mostly by newly freed Black people.

Many spoke the Gullah language, and they had a distinct African culture. Rice field hands were highly skilled and worked under a task system, in which the newly emancipated workers could complete work by the afternoon and then had the autonomy to work in their own home gardens.

Rice growing in the Lowcountry in the so-called “golden age of the antebellum South” had been controlled by a rich aristocracy of families: the Manigaults, Izards, Allstons and Heywards. The Civil War shattered the golden age of their rice kingdom; the Sea Islands were occupied by federal troops early in the Civil War. Union Army raids destroyed buildings, machinery, implements and irrigation systems. Freed people liberated many of their owners’ possessions.

By the end of 1865, reactionary President Andrew Johnson halted Reconstruction for a time. He reversed the Freedmen’s Bureau policy, pardoned the landowners and authorized the return of “their” lands. But Black people in the Lowcountry had no intention of giving up their claims to the land. They rejected the authority of the former landowners to retake the land and directly supervise their labor.

In the early 1870s, some Lowcountry planters succeeded in regaining control of thousands of acres of land employing

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# Over 1,000 people sign letter hitting New York Times' anti-trans bias

By Princess Harmony

A letter, dated Feb. 15 and signed by over 1,000 contributors and subscribers to the New York Times, trans people and allies called on the paper to reject the new wave of bigots attempting to stifle trans lives.

"We write to you as a collective of New York Times contributors with serious concerns about editorial bias in the newspaper's reporting on transgender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming people," the letter addressed to Philip B. Corbett, associate managing editor for standards at The New York Times, began.

"Plenty of reporters at the Times cover trans issues fairly. Their work is eclipsed, however, by what one journalist has

calculated as over 15,000 words of front-page Times coverage debating the propriety of medical care for trans children published in the last eight months alone."

A second letter to the Times, initiated by a number of LGBTQ+ civil rights organizations, made similar points.

Just a few days earlier, on Feb. 11, a transgender teen influencer — Brianna Ghey — was found murdered in a park in Warrington, England. Police are trying to claim her death may not have been an anti-transgender hate crime, and the British state has aligned itself with anti-transgender forces. This may affect the investigation into her death.

The New York Times wrote an article depicting how beloved she was on the internet and in her life. They held nothing

back when trying to write about how she lived and died.

But Ghey wasn't even buried, before the New York Times published a screed defending noted transphobe and trans-misogynist J.K. Rowling.

The Harry Potter books' author often uses her Twitter site to push anti-trans misinformation and slander. Her allies include some so-called feminists, who maintain that transgender identities reinforce traditional gender roles and that transgender people need to live in their birth genders. Rowling's cohorts also include far-right reactionaries, who harass trans people online and offline. On top of this, she still has a legion of fans who wait on her every word, not caring about the written violence she commits toward trans people. □



The screed defending Rowling was hardly a lone article. It was one of many the New York Times has published attacking or otherwise criticizing transgender people. From articles claiming that trans youth are "spreading" a "contagion" to other youths, who then identify as transgender, to articles saying that transgender people initiated a culture war, the New York Times finds itself on the same side as far-right-wing reactionaries and hate groups. □

## Boston education workers roll the union on!

By Steve Gillis  
Boston

In metropolitan Boston, where 44 institutions of higher education employ over 42,600 workers, unorganized workers have announced new union campaigns nearly every week since the new year.

Over 500 Boston University (BU) resident advisers, graduate resident advisers and graduate housing assistants rallied Feb. 8 to demand immediate recognition of their new union, the BU Resident Life Union of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 509.

Accompanied by a tuba, a trombone and a tap-dancing duo of resident-adviser organizers, student workers took the microphone, provided by the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, Steelworkers Local 8751. They told

their stories of poverty-level compensation; food insecurity; lack of medical, dental and mental health care; and unaffordable housing at BU, one of Boston's largest landlords. The workers demanded immediate union recognition, reporting overwhelming support from the campus community.

The BU Resident Life Union joins 3,500 members of BU Graduate Workers United, who electrified the city Dec. 7, 2022, with a historic 98.1% vote to unionize with SEIU Local 509 in a National Labor Relations Board-supervised election. (workers.org/2022/12/68283/)

Over 6,000 postdoctoral, research, adjunct and non-tenured faculty at Harvard University rallied Feb. 14 in Harvard Yard on the Cambridge campus and at the Harvard Medical School campus in Boston to announce their campaign to form Harvard Academic Workers, part of the United Auto Workers.

With rousing professions of enduring Valentine's Day love for their co-workers — most of whom are treated by Harvard bosses as temporary, disposable contractors, with a maximum of eight yearly contract renewals — lecturers, laboratory workers and lifesaving public-health researchers denounced the precariousness of their jobs at the most prestigious and



WW PHOTO: MAIREAD SKEHAN-GILLIS  
Harvard Academic Workers rally at T.H. Chan School of Public Health to announce their union card-signing campaign, Feb. 14, 2023.

wealthy university in the country. Solidarity from USW Local 8751, Alphabet (Google) workers and local politicians highlighted the rally.

The BU Resident Life Union and Harvard Academic Workers join thousands of other newly organizing workers at Northeastern, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Tufts universities. In recent months they have taken on these giants of Boston's "nonprofit" educational-military-real estate-industrial complex.

Mostly young Generation Z workers are teaching these global corporations — which pay no taxes for local social services but charge students upwards of \$60,000 per year tuition, leading to their lifelong debt — the class lesson.

Loudly bouncing off their centuries-old, hallowed halls at every rally is the slogan, "When We Fight, We Win!" □



Boston University resident life workers rally at George Sherman Union for union recognition, Feb. 8, 2023.

## Black Reconstruction on Carolina's Gold Coast

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hundreds of Black workers. The bosses had imposed a check system, whereby checks compensating the workers were only redeemable at plantation-owned company stores.

### Black workers strike!

In May of 1876, workers along the Combahee and Ashepoo Rivers struck against a wage cut from 50 cents to 40 cents a day and demanded a raise to 75 cents a day, depending on the condition of the land. The strike spread to many plantations.

Hundreds of Black workers marched through the rice district with horns and drums. Some were armed with clubs, urging plantation workers to leave the fields. The workers' response was overwhelming; by the end of May, they had won their demand for a wage of 50 cents a day, and many were being paid in cash.

Opposing South Carolina Governor

Daniel Henry Chamberlin, a Reconstruction supporter, was former Confederate General Wade Hampton, who had been one of the largest holders of land and enslaved people in the South. Closely allied with racist "rifle club" members, his campaign sought "regime change" to return to rule by large plantation owners.

On Aug. 18, 1876, a second round of strikes began on the plantations of J.B. Bissell and trial judge Henry Fuller. The workers demanded \$1 to \$1.50 a day for harvest labor, payable in cash.

Fuller brought in the Green Pond rifle club heavily armed members to restore order, and he got 10 strike leaders arrested. But a crowd of Black workers soon appeared and drove the judge, sheriff and rifle club members to seek refuge in a threshing mill.

### Strike leaders supported, acquitted

Black Congress member Robert Smalls, a Reconstruction leader, was in the area

where the strikers held their ground. When he came to Fuller's mill, he found 300 Black workers threatening to attack 40 armed whites. Smalls negotiated a compromise which was agreeable to the strikers. The rifle club members were allowed to depart, avoiding violence. All 10 detained strike leaders were acquitted, due to Smalls' support and the presence of a crowd of Black workers outside the courthouse in Beaufort, South Carolina.

In September 1876, Hampton invaded the Lowcountry, accompanied by 600 rifle club members. However, he was heckled and forced to retreat. He later returned with 3,000 armed men and gave his speech uninterrupted. When he reached Beaufort, Hampton was surrounded by Black people whose animosity he felt every step of the way.

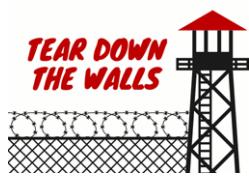
With the coming to power of the Hampton regime through a questionable election, there was little possibility of collective action by rural Black workers. In South Carolina, sheriffs and the state

militia were employed for the benefit of the big landowners to crush the ongoing organizing and resistance by Black agricultural workers.

But due to the strikes and struggles during Reconstruction, as well as the collapse of the rice plantations, Black ownership of the land persisted for years. Even in 1910, almost 60% of the farms in Beaufort and Charleston counties was owned by Black people. Black workers in struggle during revolts against enslavement and in the Civil War and Reconstruction played an enormous role in the founding of the U.S. labor movement.

*Jim McMahan's great grandfather, John Evans, proudly participated in the March to the Sea, alongside Black Union Army soldiers.*

*Sources: James Allen, "Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy"; Eric Foner, "Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy"*



# Mumia Abu-Jamal supporters demand 'Release the evidence now!'

By Monica Moorehead

There is growing international support for the freedom of U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been imprisoned in Pennsylvania for over 40 years. Mumia was falsely accused of killing a white police officer in December 1981 in Philadelphia. He was convicted of first-degree murder on July 3, 1982, following a sham trial. Mumia spent years on death row awaiting execution until December 2011, when he was released to a medium security prison. Mass pressure in the streets has stopped the state from executing him twice.

The suppression of important exculpatory evidence, including the racist exclusion of Black jurors during his original trial, has for decades prevented him from being granted a new trial that would eventually lead to his freedom. That could all eventually change now.

A Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas judge ruled on Dec. 16, 2022, that Mumia's lawyers had the right to examine at least 200 boxes of this critical hidden evidence, which could prove that there was a conspiracy to permanently silence him, because of his revolutionary political beliefs. The judge announced a 60-to 90-day extension to all prosecuting attorneys to provide this evidence.

Actions took place on Feb. 16 inside the U.S. and

worldwide, 60 days after the judge's ruling, to put pressure to release these boxes to Mumia's lawyers. Besides activists organizing inside the U.S. to allow this evidence to see the light of day, the General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa, Irvin Jim, put out a special plea on Twitter and on YouTube to demand that Mumia be set free as a political prisoner due to wrongful arrest. Jim called for an international campaign to win justice for Mumia.

Representatives of Hoshino Defense Committee, Osaka Defense Committee and the National Railway Motive Power Union of Chiba prepared a list of demands to present to the U.S. Ambassador to Japan in Tokyo on Feb. 16 to be sent to the U.S. government.

The three groups who make up the International Solidarity Committee of Doro-Chiba reported in a press release: "On the way there, police officers and plainclothes formed a blocking line and refused to let us through. When we protested persistently, a plainclothes officer connected us to the U.S. Embassy with his phone. The Embassy officer refused even posting our letter to the embassy's post box. We approached nearer to the embassy and held a rally for Mumia's freedom. The letter was sent by mail with delivery certificate."

The demands sent were:

- "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, who suffers from deteriorated health conditions caused by 41 years of incarceration!"
- Free Mumia NOW! He is innocent. Fair retrial could be held thereafter; and
- Abolish racial discrimination in jury selection! Do not exclude Black and Brown persons!"

Mumia supporters in Berlin, Germany, mobilized on a day's notice in front of the U.S. Embassy Feb. 16. Almost 30 people came and chanted slogans and held up banners right in front of the embassy. □



PHOTO CREDIT: INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE OF DORO-CHIBA  
Members of Hoshino Defense Committee, Osaka Defense Committee and Doro-Chiba and its supporters went to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo in support of Mumia on Feb. 16

# ILWU shuts down SF, Oakland docks for Mumia

By Dave Welsh  
San Francisco

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union shut down the ports of Oakland and San Francisco Feb. 16 to demand that journalist and innocent political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal be exonerated and set free.

Local 10 workers began the day with a "stop-work meeting" at their union hall, then marched along the San Francisco Embarcadero to an inspiring rally at Harry Bridges Plaza. Bridges was the founder of the ILWU in 1937.

They contend that the over 200 "newly discovered" boxes of evidence — including a hand-written letter from the prosecution's star witness demanding payment for his false but incriminating testimony at trial — will prove Mumia's innocence. The boxes, found hidden in the DA's office, also showed evidence of attempts to exclude Black people from the jury.

At the rally, Clarence Thomas, a third-generation longshore worker and former Local 10 officer, said that during the Black uprising of the 1960s, "we all had our consciousness raised by the movement: Malcolm X, the struggles of Martin Luther King, the Deacons for Defense, Stokely Carmichael, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale."

Thomas himself joined the Black Panther Party at the time.

"Mumia has personally thanked the ILWU for the actions we have taken, including in 1999 when we shut down all 29 ports on the West Coast to stop his execution," Thomas said.

## South Africa connection

In 1984 ILWU dockers refused to unload South African cargo at Pier 80 in San Francisco for 10 days to protest South Africa's apartheid regime. Nelson Mandela recognized the important role of the ILWU in helping their freedom struggle, when he spoke at the Oakland Coliseum in 1990, soon after his release from prison.

Thomas pointed out that his union sent 14 ILWU



Clarence Thomas, at the mic, Feb. 16, 2023. PHOTO: LABOR MEDIA

members to South Africa this past January "to build the campaign for Mumia's freedom. What kind of union does something like that?"

"Today," said Thomas, "our union did not go to work in the ports of Oakland and San Francisco to demand Mumia's freedom. No cargo moved. Trucking and railroad schedules got disrupted.

"Can you imagine if the Teamsters, the railroad workers, the airline pilots, if all the transportation unions had also taken off today? Mumia would be out of prison."

While they were in South Africa, longshore worker David Newton, nephew of Black Panther Party co-founder Huey Newton, and ILWU retiree Jack Heyman met with Irvin Jim, General-Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). They agreed to use the period from Feb. 16 to March 16 to mobilize for Mumia. Numsa is the largest single union in South Africa and one of the largest in Africa.

Other international protests for Mumia were scheduled for Sao Paulo, Brazil; Pretoria, South Africa; Tokyo; and several cities in Europe.

The Oakland Education Association, with its 3,000 teachers, sent a letter to Judge Lucretia Clemons urging Mumia's release from prison. Mumia himself sent a letter thanking his labor supporters with these words: "When workers unite, the Earth trembles and the heavens shake." □

# Hunger strikes and a lawsuit over solitary confinement in Texas

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Texas prisoners have been organizing for over a year to bring attention to an issue that is wounding and sometimes killing them: solitary confinement, which damages incarcerated people both mentally and physically.

Solitary confinement incites suicides and self-mutilation. It causes violent behavior. And when a person is entombed in a cell smaller than a parking place, it diminishes their vision, reduces their muscles and damages their bone structure.

On Jan. 10, as the Texas legislature began its biannual session, over 300 prisoners at a half dozen prisons around the state began a hunger strike to demand an end to the torture of solitary. The hunger strike lasted for over three weeks.

Prison spokesperson Amanda

Hernandez reported to the Texas Tribune that four people required intravenous infusions during the strike. Hernandez also said the prison authorities have refused all media interviews with those who participated in the strike. "By allowing interviews, we feel we are allowing them to organize and further cause disruption," she said.

Despite this censorship, several strikers managed to write to the Texas Tribune about the strike. Jose Guadalupe Lucio, incarcerated at Texas' Ferguson Unit, wrote in part: "I've seen good inmates lose it; I've seen people kill themselves, and I've seen these Correctional Officers have to cut down an inmate that hanged himself. And all these years, these people here have done nothing to even try to help . . . this is a psych patient-making factory." (Texas Tribune, Jan. 30)

There are well over 3,000 prisoners

held in solitary in Texas. Every single person on Texas death row is in permanent solitary, in a cell with a solid steel door, not bars.

At least eight Texas death row prisoners have died by suicide in the last 20 years, according to the prison's web page. The most recent suicide was on Jan. 21, when Terence Andrus, 34, was discovered unresponsive after hanging himself in his cramped cell.

Five days later on Jan. 25, attorneys for four men on death row filed a 45-page lawsuit in federal court in Houston that details that the mandated solitary confinement, lack of medical care and deprivation of attorney visits are all violations of the U.S. Constitution.

## Class action from death row

Four men are named plaintiffs of the lawsuit: Tony Egbuna Ford, 49, who

has spent 22 years in solitary; Mark Robertson, 54, 21 years in solitary; Rickey Cummings, 33, nine years; and George Curry, 55, seven years. They are asking the federal court to declare the lawsuit as a class action to represent all of the men on Texas death row.

Medical visits for prisoners sentenced to death are sporadic. Mental and physical health providers are often forced to converse with their patients openly on the row, where other prisoners and prison guards can easily overhear conversations regarding private mental and physical health concerns. Legal visits can take weeks to schedule and occur in a public setting, where their conversations are also easily overheard by other visitors, other prisoners and by guards.

Texas Death Penalty Abolition

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# Family of disabled man killed by police files historic ADA lawsuit

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Matthew Zadok Williams, 35 years old, was experiencing a mental health breakdown April 12, 2021, at his home of five years in Decatur, just east of Atlanta. The police were called to investigate a "homeless-looking person with a knife," walking around in a wooded yard.

The 911 caller suspected "the stranger was going to break into someone's house."

DeKalb County police confronted Williams on his own property, where he allegedly brandished the weapon and then ran and barricaded himself in his home.

Just three weeks earlier, on March 16, 2021, Williams had called 911 requesting an ambulance to take him for health services. DeKalb officers arrived and decided not to call an ambulance, dismissing his mental condition. They also failed to report the incident, which would have established a record for the fatal interaction with police.

As it happened, one of the officers who came on April 12 had been on the March call. He not only knew that Williams owned his home and was not trespassing or attempting to break in, he was heard on his body camera commenting that "the man has mental health issues."

Nevertheless, the police video shows at least three officers with their guns out and one with a drawn taser at Williams' front door, yelling that he should come out. They then bust the door through, and Williams, hiding



Matthew Zadok Williams

behind a piece of furniture, is shot at least twice.

The police closed the door and withdrew to wait for a SWAT team. Then 90 minutes passed before one arrived, and when this crisis squad entered, Williams was found dead, having bled out from his wounds.

Since then his family has been determined to win justice for their son and brother. With the assistance of a

large number of young community activists, they have held weekly protests in front of the DeKalb County Courthouse and on the corners of busy intersections throughout the county.

Denied indictments by the DeKalb County District Attorney, who in 2022 found the shooting "justifiable"; on Feb. 17, the family's lawyers filed a civil lawsuit in federal court charging the county with violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, under Section 1983.

## People with disabilities are 50% of police victims

Despite mountains of evidence that people with disabilities are disproportionately killed or injured by police, including a 2016 report by Ruderman Family Foundation that 50% of people killed by police nationally have a disability, the suit claims DeKalb County delayed provision or minimally provided their police force with competent, de-escalation training. Even more damning was their failure to create a full-time, fully staffed physical and mental health unit to respond to issues impacting people with disabilities.

Williams was not the first person experiencing a mental health crisis to be murdered by DeKalb County police. Anthony Hill, a young Afghanistan War veteran who suffered from PTSD, was observed wandering naked in the parking lot of his apartment complex on March 9, 2015. Known as a friendly and kind person, his neighbors called 911 to get him help. Instead as he walked toward DeKalb Officer Robert Olsen, the clearly unarmed Black man was shot and killed.

After four years of protest by outraged youth and legal proceedings by Hill's family, Olsen was tried for murder and convicted of lesser charges in 2019. In response, DeKalb set up a two-person, part-time mental health crisis team to serve the entire county. However, this crisis team — unavailable for considerable parts of the day — is often disregarded by on-duty police.

The Williams family's "historic" lawsuit challenges the notion that the ADA has limited application for building accessibility or parking spaces or job accommodations in the struggle for equity. Rather it says governmental agencies, especially police forces, are required to provide full protections and respectful treatment of people with physical and mental disabilities.

Under capitalism, the police will always be agents of the bosses, landlords and bankers, but the mass movement can curb some of the egregious, bigoted and violent practices. The family of Matthew Zadok Williams inspires solidarity for their unrelenting insistence that his Black life mattered. □

# Protests demand U.S. military out of the Philippines

By Arjae Red

U.S. Secretary of Defense, and former Raytheon board member, Lloyd Austin visited the Philippines, where he met with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Feb. 1 to announce the expansion of the U.S. military presence there, from five to nine bases. The expansion and establishment of these bases are allowed under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA).

This announcement has sparked outrage among the people of the Philippines, who held mass demonstrations in 1991 and shut down Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base, which had been used to support the U.S. war of aggression against Vietnam.

The Filipino people have fought hard for more than a century against U.S. colonialism. During the Philippine-American war, the U.S. military slaughtered more than a million people. The 124th anniversary of the war, which began Feb. 4, 1899, coincided with Secretary Austin's visit to Manilla.

## BAYAN USA Call to Action

Ten days after President Marcos and Secretary Austin met, activists and allies of the national-democratic movement of the Philippines mobilized for a Call to Action, which was put out by BAYAN USA.

Rallies hit the streets demanding an end to the EDCA, expulsion of all U.S. troops from Philippine territory, the end of all joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises, the end of all U.S. military aid to the armed forces and police of the Philippines and an end to the colonial relationship



PHOTO: ANAKBAYAN MANHATTAN

of the country to the U.S.

This writer spoke to LRT, an organizer with BAYAN Seattle, who shared their thoughts on the U.S. military expansion: "The presence of the U.S. military carries a dual purpose of maintaining the semicolonial system in the Philippines and ensuring its guns remain aimed at China. There is no regard for the people or the environment, as the U.S. Navy has historically polluted local waters and damaged coral reefs, affecting the marine life and disrupting the livelihood of fisherfolk."

"Everywhere there has been a U.S. military base, there has also been a red-light district. The tourism of military personnel isn't just at night clubs and local clubs. The violence against Filipina women intensifies with the presence of military personnel, as evidenced by the 2014 murder of Jennifer Laude by U.S. Marine Joseph Pemberton."

Although Pemberton was imprisoned first in a Philippine jail, he was ultimately released to U.S. custody. Today he walks free in Hawaii with no justice for the Laude family.

LRT continued: "It is the U.S. Special Forces that train the murderous butchers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines to inflict harm on our communities in the name of 'counterinsurgency' and 'anti-terrorism.' Who better to teach the AFP to terrorize its own people than the number-one terrorist in the world?"

## U.S. increases bases, threats to China

These newly secured bases were the missing link in completing what is referred to as the "first island chain" in the U.S.-military enclosure of China. These bases are situated on the land sites closest to Taiwan. As Washington builds up U.S. forces in the region for war against China, supplies and nuclear weapons could be stored on these bases.

With a U.S./NATO-instigated proxy war in Ukraine in full-swing, justified under the auspices of "protecting" Ukraine, and with the U.S. showing no desire to de-escalate, there is no reason to believe joint-access military base expansion would protect the Philippines. U.S. maneuvers in the region have threatened aggression against China. The presence of additional U.S. military personnel only puts the Philippines in the crossfire.

To access BAYAN USA's press release against the U.S. military presence in the Philippines, go to [facebook.com/bayanusapage/](https://facebook.com/bayanusapage/).

# Texas prison fightback

*continued from page 7*

Movement activists have searched for decades to find attorneys or legal organizations who would sue the prison system to stop the horrors of indefinite solitary confinement. They could not find them. Finally, an international law firm based in London with an office in Houston, Hogan Lovells, has taken on the challenge.

Hogan Lovells partner Pieter Van Tol said: "The conditions on death row in Texas have been characterized as some of the most brutal death row conditions in the country. The plaintiffs in this case are seeking relief from conditions

that have been described as torture." ([hoganlovells.com](http://hoganlovells.com), Jan. 26)

The legal brief says the National Commission of Correctional Health Care has stated that spans of solitary confinement longer than 15 days are "cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment and harmful to an individual's health," and "should be eliminated as a means of punishment." Additionally, the United Nations has described indefinite or prolonged solitary confinement as torture.

Hogan Lovells is the same firm that won a court-approved settlement of a class action in September 2021. The settlement challenged the rules that place

all Louisiana's incarcerated individuals, who are on death row, in indefinite solitary confinement.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott and reactionary conservatives running the Texas prison system's administration have shown absolutely no interest in protecting the rights of those incarcerated in prison or in prolonged solitary.

Activists are hoping that those on death row can win this lawsuit. A victory would not only mandate changes, it may grant monetary damages for the prisoners affected. Such a win would announce a new day for the rights of incarcerated people in Texas.



Until complete abolition of prisons is possible, a victory in this lawsuit would be a good step in the right direction.

Gloria Rubac is a founding member of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

# On the 20th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq

# Saturday, March 18, National March on Washington

The United National AntiWar Coalition ([unacpeace.org](http://unacpeace.org)) sent the message below to its supporters.

## No War in Ukraine! No to NATO! No Weapons, No Money for the Ukraine War!

Coinciding with the 20th anniversary weekend of the criminal U.S.-invasion of Iraq, a major set of actions, including a demonstration at the White House in Washington, D.C., will take place Saturday, March 18, demanding "Peace in Ukraine — Say NO to Endless U.S. Wars" and "Fund People's Needs, Not the War Machine."

Since 2003, the U.S. has engaged in sanctions (economic war) on more than 40 countries. These targets of U.S. economic warfare include the people of Cuba, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iran and many other nations. Even in the wake of the worst disasters, like the recent deadly earthquake, Washington keeps its cruel sanctions in place against Syria.

U.S. bases and "commands" blanket most of the world. It is a global empire.

The Biden administration is determined to escalate the Ukraine war. The real goal of the massive arming and training of Ukrainian forces has nothing to do with the interests of Ukrainian, Russian or U.S. people. The aim instead is to "weaken Russia," as stated by the U.S. Secretary of



Protest in Times Square, New York City, Jan. 14, 2023, part of international week of actions during Martin Luther King birthday week.

Defense himself, even at the risk of a catastrophic nuclear war that could end life on Earth.

A U.S. general commanding 50,000 troops in the Pacific also issued a letter to his sub-commanders in recent days, informing them that he believes that the United States will be at war with China within two years. The danger of global war is growing! The people must act!

The demonstration will make connections between the human and financial toll of U.S. militarism at home and abroad. Key demands include:

1. Peace in Ukraine — No weapons, no money for the Ukraine War!
2. Abolish NATO — End U.S. militarism and sanctions!
3. Fund people's needs, not the war machine!
4. No war with China!
5. End U.S. aid to racist apartheid Israel!
6. Fight racism and bigotry at home, not other peoples!
7. U.S. hands off Haiti!
8. End AFRICOM!

## Endorsers:

United National AntiWar Coalition; ANSWER Coalition; Black Alliance for Peace; The People's Forum; CodePink; World BEYOND War; Popular Resistance; Veterans for Peace; International Action Center; Party for Socialism and Liberation; Al-Awda; The Palestine Right to Return Coalition; Labor Against Racism and War; Leonard Peltier Defense Committee; Universal African Peoples Organization; Workers World Party; East Bay Democratic Socialists of America; Socialist Action; Nevada Green Party; Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network; Ohio Peace Council; Green Party of Connecticut; Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists Social Justice Committee; Environmentalists Against War; Pacific Green Party (Oregon); Linn-Benton Chapter, Lauren Faith Smith Ministry for Nonviolence; Maine Cumberland County Greens; Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace; San Jose Peace and Justice Center; Servicio Particular Alacran; Minnesota Peace Action Coalition; PeaceWorks of Greater Brunswick; UPWARD (Uniting Peace With Actions Respect and Dignity); Socialist Party of America; North Country Peace Group; ... and more.

*Go to [unacpeace.org/march18.html](http://unacpeace.org/march18.html). to help build this action. Endorse at [unacpeace.org/march18endorse.html](http://unacpeace.org/march18endorse.html).*

# End sanctions on Syria!

Continued from page 1

program in Syria. That began in 2019, when we personally hand-carried aid to Syria.

We also challenge the U.S. government and other governments that are imposing sanctions on Syria, because there is no active U.S. charitable organization that is operating in what I would call Syria — which does not include the very small areas that are occupied by the terrorist organizations sponsored by the United States and NATO, which are also occupying all the oil territories as well.

Where most Syrian people live, they face these draconian sanctions that prevent nearly all financial transactions between Syria and any other nation in the world, at least until recently. And the result is that Syria is being starved.

Syrians can't buy oil, for example. They shouldn't need to, because they have oil themselves. But the U.S., which claims to be protecting the oil, is selling it off. It's the same with Syrian wheat, which was Syria's other big cash earner internationally and which is located in essentially the same occupied area.

Thus Syria's economy, which was growing rather quickly and doing rather well in 2010, got turned around.

Why? First of all, because Syria insists on its own sovereignty, and the Syrian people don't want to be exploited economically by other countries. Syria also refuses to cooperate with the foreign policy of NATO and its allies. And the people do not want to bow down to Israel, especially when Israel is occupying part of Syria's territory.

So when the U.S. said, "We want to build a pipeline across your territory," President Assad responded, "No, I don't accept for you to do that."

Then all of a sudden on Assad's doorstep, there was a so-called uprising of

less than 10% of the population. These were extreme conservatives, the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, and the U.S. imported the usual suspects, al-Qaeda and ISIS. They didn't start out using those names necessarily, but these are the U.S. and NATO's hired guns. They brought them in to stir things up, and they have given them plenty of weapons and money.

Then they said this is a "civil war." Not exactly so. So all of this started, and the United States isolated Syria through sanctions and basically started starving the people. So here is Syria starving, and our movement decided we would provide aid to Syria.

### U.S. policy unchanged since earthquake

**Larudee:** Through the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the U.S. government finally issued a revision of the sanctions. Supposedly this suspends any aspect of the sanctions that impedes the flow of relief to help people and property connected with the earthquake. I'm sorry, but that's a joke. It's ridiculous.

Why? Because in the first place, the U.S. always said that the sanctions are not supposed to be used against humanitarian aid. So that was already in place. All they did was to suspend anything that would stop the delivery of humanitarian aid. So they don't block the aid; they just made it impossible to deliver the aid.

That's what the U.S. has been doing for more than 10 years. And this new regulation changes nothing. It's called General License 23 from OFAC, which says: "Okay, if it's obstructing aid, then ignore it. Go ahead and provide aid, and we won't prosecute you for it."

But the problem is, in order to get money into Syria, you need bank-to-bank relations. Your banks need to be able to send money across borders. The U.S. says they're allowing this, supposedly for 180 days, and only for humanitarian aid.

Can you possibly believe that after setting up a relationship with Syrian banks, the Mellon Bank in New York or Citibank or Bank National de Paris is going to check every transaction that takes place to see which ones are for earthquake-related aid and equipment and then worry about anything that looks like it may not be quite earthquake-related?

What bank is going to actually step in and risk getting fined? And even if they did, it's only for 180 days. The bank management will say, "This isn't worth it. How much money will we make from the fees for this service? Why would we bother?"

I don't expect that to happen now. So that's why we, of course, are trying to step into the gap and get donations and deliver them the hard way, delivering aid directly to Syria.

### Wolves in sheep's clothing

**Larudee:** There are a number of aid organizations that are saying, "Please give us money to help the people in Syria." Almost invariably, these are U.S. organizations, and invariably they're talking about helping the people who live on 3% of Syria's land in the Idlib province, which is occupied by the Turks, and by their proxies, and the U.S. proxies, the terrorists themselves.

So when the aid organizations say, "We want to help the people of Syria," that's who they're talking about. And they're doing it without the permission of the Syrian government.

On the other hand, even if these organizations want to operate in the rest of Syria, they can't, because they've been banned by the Syrian government, because they're enemies. They don't have a license; they don't have permission to practice there.

Watch out for those ads by organizations like the Syrian American Medical Society, for example. They're advertising that they're collecting money to help the

earthquake victims in Syria. In less than 24 hours, they collected almost \$300,000.

The earthquake victims the U.S. organizations are helping in Syria are the ones who have the least need. I'm not saying they're needless, because the occupied areas also have damage there. But they're going to deliver the aid to people living on 3% of the land in Syria — and not the rest of them.

**Workers World:** And the sad thing is, this is a sign that the U.S. working class is willing to open their hearts and their wallets and help. They know this is a horrible situation, but they don't have the information about where the money is going to. I wanted to ask you for a brief comment about a particular organization that gets so much press here — a movie about them even won an Oscar: the White Helmets.

**Larudee:** It's difficult to speak briefly about the White Helmets, but I'll make it as brief as I can. Basically, they're a fake organization which was put together by a British mercenary named James Le Mesurier, to supposedly act in times of emergency to evacuate the wounded and provide humanitarian services [during the Syrian war].

In the zones of Syria where they operated, they almost invariably worked to protect and provide for the needs of the families of the terrorist fighters themselves. And because they, or the terrorists who were their allies, basically killed or made life dangerous for reporters, they became the reporters on the ground.

**Workers World:** We see that if we want to be helpful to Syrians, we should demand: U.S. troops out of Syria! End U.S. sanctions! Emergency relief now!

*To sign a petition against U.S. sanctions or donate to the Syria Support Movement go to [tinyurl.com/4eu2sn4](http://tinyurl.com/4eu2sn4).*

# What led to a long war

Imperialist politicians and media are flooding the public with the same lies that they've been hyping all year about the U.S.-NATO proxy war in Ukraine. President Joe Biden's provocative visit to Kiev Feb. 20, bearing gifts of more weapons to expand the war, heightens the danger to the world.

It's still within the power of the working class in Europe and the U.S. to obstruct the imperialist offensive.

What's needed is an antidote to the poison from the corporate media. A concise list of events show how Washington forced this war to happen.

On March 12, 1999, NATO inducted the Czech Republic (or Czechia), Hungary and Poland into the U.S.-led alliance. This act exposed as false U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's 1991 pledge that "NATO would not move its armies one inch closer to the Russia border." (New York Times, Jan. 9, 2022)

Just 12 days later the U.S., with its major NATO allies, launched bombs and rockets at bridges, schools and hospitals in Serbia and Montenegro. The attack lasted 79 days. The war paved the road to annihilating the

multinational Yugoslav socialist state.

U.S. agencies manipulated the so-called "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine in 2004, which replaced a government friendly to Russia with one more dependent on the West. Then from 2013 through 2014, U.S. agencies financed and promoted the so-called Maidan revolution, a fascist-infested revolt that expelled the elected president and imposed an anti-Russian coup regime in Kiev.

#### Kiev attacks ethnic Russians

This gang's first act was to squash the Russian language in Ukraine.

The Crimean peninsula had been part of Russia from 1783 until 1954. In 2014, Crimea's mostly ethnic Russian population chose in a referendum to rejoin Russia. Using Russia's recovery of Crimea as a pretext, Washington arm-twisted European Union countries to target Russia with economic sanctions.

People who lived in the two provinces of the Donbass region, also mostly ethnic Russian, established independent republics in Donetsk and Lugansk in 2014. Kiev

answered this cry for self-determination by waging war on the two republics.

Cease-fire agreements signed in Minsk, Belarus, in September 2014, failed to stop the fighting in Ukraine. In a Dec. 7, 2022, interview in the German newspaper, Die Zeit, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel admitted that the EU and Kiev used the agreements to buy time to strengthen Ukraine's military. During the next eight years, the Ukrainian Army killed 14,000 people in the Donbass.

NATO expanded from 19 members in 1999 to 30 in 2022, including countries that had been part of the Soviet Union and most of the countries that had been allied with the Soviet Union before 1991. NATO held provocative

military exercises that moved ever closer to the Russian borders, while the U.S. started deploying potential first-strike nuclear weapons in Europe.

Faced with what was arguably an existential threat, the Moscow government opened its military intervention in Ukraine a year ago. Washington immediately began waging a proxy war against Russia, arming Ukraine and using its population as cannon fodder, pressuring its NATO allies to spend more money on weapons and to arm Kiev's troops with weapons available in the allies' stockpiles.

Last March, the U.S. sabotaged tentative moves toward Ukrainian-Russian negotiations, while demanding Europe break its mutually beneficial trade ties with Russia.

U.S. political and military leaders have said openly that their goal was to extend the war to weaken Russia. Imperialist politicians and media demonized Russian President Vladimir Putin, just as they did to Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Libya's Moammar Gadhafi and Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic — before invading and destroying their countries.

As renowned journalist Seymour Hersh recently revealed, U.S. forces even carried out an act of terror by bombing the Russian-owned Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea. ([tinyurl.com/bdhn647j](http://tinyurl.com/bdhn647j)) This act prevented German leaders — had any been considering the possibility — from reestablishing Germany's trade with Russia for its gas and oil. ([workers.org/2022/10/66955/](http://workers.org/2022/10/66955/))

Until now the European NATO regimes, while sometimes expressing hesitations, have lined up behind Washington's aggression. The strongest opposition would come mainly from the working class, who pay the social costs of the war and risk getting involved in a major catastrophe. The outbreaks of class struggle in France, Spain, Italy and Portugal are a sign of hope.

This chronological list of events shows that the anti-war movement in Europe and the U.S. has its enemy in Washington and in the Western European capitals. The movement's rightful demands are clear: U.S. and NATO out! No weapons to Ukraine! End the sanctions! □

## BLINKEN'S UNCONTROLLED RELEASE OF TOXIC FUMES



## MUNDO OBRERO

# Puerto Rico: Una historia de resistencia

By Deborah Rodriguez

Para que cualquier organización pueda siquiera considerar destruir el sistema del imperialismo con su hegemonía occidental supremacista blanca, debe defender la autodeterminación de las naciones negras, indígenas y colonizadas más oprimidas del mundo.

El pueblo puertorriqueño que vive en la isla y en EE.UU. ha sido una nación colonizada durante más de 400 años. El pueblo ha luchado y peleado por su tierra y por el derecho a vivir una vida digna.

Desde su llegada a las costas de Puerto Rico, Estados Unidos ha gobernado el archipiélago con políticas que han extraído los poderes de autogobierno, que deberían estar en manos del pueblo puertorriqueño. La imposición de la Ley Jones, la Ley Mordaza y la Ley Foraker, combinadas con el saqueo sin límites de nuestra tierra y el control de nuestra economía por parte de invasores extranjeros, junto con algunos de nuestros propios compradores, han dejado claro que se ha desatado una guerra de clases contra el pueblo puertorriqueño.

Desde el primer día, mi pueblo ha resistido con el firme e implacable entendimiento de que tenemos que controlar nuestro destino como nación. Desde el antillano y abolicionista Ramón Emeterio Betances, pasando por los nacionalistas que asaltaron la capital en 1954 -Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andrés Figueroa e Irving Flores Rodríguez-, hasta el liderazgo de Pedro Albizu Campos y



Juan Antonio Corretjer; la solidaridad de Roberto Clemente con el pueblo nicaragüense y el amor al pueblo demostrado por los compañeros del Partido de los Jóvenes Lores, que se apoderaron de un hospital para brindar atención médica gratuita en la comunidad.

Entre los presos políticos que se han sacrificado por el amor revolucionario a su pueblo se encuentran Oscar López Rivera, Luis Rosa Pérez y Ana Belén Montes, recientemente liberada tras años de condena por solidizarse con el pueblo cubano.

La misma lucha vive hoy en las voces de las masas puertorriqueñas que exigen la destitución de una compañía eléctrica extranjera, LUMA, que sustituyó puestos de trabajo protegidos por sindicatos para el pueblo puertorriqueño por consultores extranjeros y el aumento persistente de las facturas eléctricas, todo ello mientras el pueblo sufre apagones, poniéndolo en peligro físico y de salud.

El pueblo ha resistido la Ley PROMESA aprobada por el presidente Barack Obama, y su junta de gobierno La Junta, un grupo de empresarios enemigos de la clase trabajadora puertorriqueña. La

Junta ha promulgado políticas que impactan la educación, las pensiones, los salarios, la salud y que han resultado en el robo de nuestras tierras.

Y nuestras condiciones en EE.UU. no son mejores. Los puertorriqueños en EE.UU. a menudo luchan con condiciones similares a las que se enfrentan en el continente. La tasa de pobreza es ligeramente superior entre los puertorriqueños que viven en Estados Unidos que entre otros grupos latinos. Los puertorriqueños se encuentran entre el 56% de la población latina que forma parte del injusto sistema de justicia penal. Esto es una prueba más de que ser "ciudadano" de EE.UU. no se

traduce en una vida decente y justa.

Lamentablemente, esta situación no es exclusiva de Puerto Rico. Estas condiciones son similares a las que enfrentan el Sur Global y las colonias internas de los EE.UU. La única manera de que este estado colonizado blanco-supremacista, patriarcal y genocida sea desmantelado es mediante la construcción de alianzas sólidas y de principios con la clase obrera y las naciones más oprimidas. Su libertad y autosuficiencia garantizan la libertad de todos. V.I. Lenin comprendió por qué es necesario que nuestro llamamiento sea:

"¡Trabajadores y pueblos oprimidos del mundo se unen!" □



Marcha nocturna en el barrio de Isla Verde en San Juan, Puerto Rico, denunciando el segundo aniversario de la dictadura de la Junta de Control Fiscal impuesta por Estados Unidos, 31 de agosto de 2018.

MO FOTO

## Un llamado al movimiento

# Prepárense para la mayor crisis capitalista mundial de la historia

Continúa de página 12

derrumbó casi por completo.

Se habría derrumbado, si no hubiera sido por las frenéticas reuniones en todo el mundo y los acuerdos, en su mayoría secretos, entre los banqueros centrales en pánico de Nueva York y Washington, Alemania, Francia, Inglaterra, Japón y todos los principales bancos del mundo, para poner el sistema financiero en soporte vital.

Todo el sistema capitalista se vio tan sacudido por el crack del 2008 que decidieron hacer algo completamente sin precedentes. Los principales bancos centrales del mundo, encabezados por el Banco de la Reserva Federal, acordaron que, para evitar una crisis tan inimaginable en el futuro, bajarían colectivamente los tipos de interés para reactivar los mercados financieros.

Pero fueron más allá. Bajo la etiqueta de “flexibilización cuantitativa”, los bancos imprimieron billones de dólares y los inyectaron en el sistema financiero. La Reserva Federal inyectó al menos 20 billones de dólares en el sistema financiero, no en la economía real, sino en los grandes bancos para que los utilizaran a su antojo. (Un billón = un millón de millones.)

En los primeros días de la pandemia, con el cierre de la economía y el desplome de los mercados financieros, los bancos centrales dirigidos por la Reserva Federal inyectaron billones más en el sistema financiero y en la economía para evitar una depresión mundial.

El problema es que todo este dinero, que los bancos centrales imprimieron para evitar el colapso del sistema financiero, no tenía ninguna relación con nada de valor real; y por lo tanto, toda esta moneda carecía prácticamente de valor. Esta es una de las principales razones por las que existe una crisis de deuda tan gigantesca.

El tamaño de las crisis de deuda se oculta hasta que hay una crisis económica tan grande que el valor real de las cosas ya no se puede ocultar, y la magnitud de la deuda queda al descubierto. Esta es la realidad que empieza a desvelarse. Los bancos centrales no pueden mantener el sistema financiero con respiración asistida para siempre; esta realidad es fundamental para la crisis en la que ha entrado el sistema.

En el sistema financiero capitalista, la moneda, las acciones y otros tipos de papel pueden tener un valor nominal; sin embargo, eso es engañoso. En realidad, el papel vale mucho menos, o no vale nada, o realmente refleja una deuda oculta que acabará saliendo a la luz.

En 2008, lo que más preocupaba a los banqueros era el contagio. Los banqueros comprendieron que sus bancos y su sistema financiero son un castillo de naipes.

El contagio podría comenzar con el impago de un préstamo por parte de un país o el colapso de un banco en algún lugar, ni siquiera un gran banco. Esto se debe a que los banqueros saben que, por mucho que mientan, es probable que uno o dos acontecimientos tengan un “efecto dominó”. La semana pasada, Credit Suisse tuvo que asegurar a sus clientes que el banco era solvente. Desde entonces, el Banco de Inglaterra ha tenido que tomar medidas para tranquilizar a los mercados financieros de que algo en Londres no estaba a punto de quebrar.

### Guerra y fascismo: A qué recurre el capitalismo en una crisis como ésta

La guerra en Ucrania, que es en realidad una guerra por poderes contra Rusia, una guerra dirigida por el imperialismo estadounidense y sus aliados, ha exacerbado de varias maneras críticas las crisis económicas mundiales.

Entre otras cosas, esta guerra es otro intento del imperio imperialista estadounidense en decadencia de redimir una vez más el mundo en su interés. El principal objetivo del imperialismo estadounidense es China.

Algunos piensan que Estados Unidos ha entrado en una época post-nuclear, en la que el uso de armas nucleares que podrían destruir el mundo es impensable y, por lo tanto, está fuera de discusión. ¿Cuándo ha sido racional el imperialismo estadounidense, especialmente si está desesperado? Esto nos recuerda una importante lección histórica: cuando una crisis mundial de la magnitud de

la que se está desarrollando se cierne sobre nosotros, o la clase obrera utiliza esa crisis para promover sus propios objetivos revolucionarios y de clase, o los imperialistas utilizan la crisis para salvarse a sí mismos mediante la guerra o el fascismo.

No necesitamos mirar a ningún otro lugar del mundo

para ver los peligros del fascismo. Es parte de la crisis política a la que se enfrentan los trabajadores y los pueblos oprimidos aquí mismo. El hecho de que el Partido Demócrata abandone incluso la pretensión de representar a los trabajadores y en su lugar pronuncie una retórica vacía, sobre “cómo nuestra gran democracia está en peligro”, hace que las fuerzas pro-fascistas se sientan más envalentonadas. Recientemente Italia, que como la mayor parte de Europa se encuentra en una profunda recesión, eligió al líder de un partido neofascista como primer ministro.

No estoy diciendo que ahora Italia sea fascista. Pero esto es otro recordatorio del precio que paga la clase obrera, cuando en lugar de aprovechar una crisis en su propio interés de clase, deja un vacío para que otros lo llenen.

### ¿Es un periodo revolucionario?

Durante la mayor parte de varios siglos, los revolucionarios han debatido si un país, una región del mundo o el mundo entero se encontraban o no en un periodo revolucionario. A menudo no es una pregunta fácil de responder.

Cuando el movimiento obrero es débil y las fuerzas revolucionarias o las fuerzas y organizaciones de vanguardia son débiles, parece que estos hechos responden por sí solos a la pregunta. Sin embargo, los períodos revolucionarios se producen por acontecimientos y crisis complejos y variados a lo largo de un periodo de tiempo. La crisis capitalista a la que nos enfrentamos es el tipo de cosa que crea períodos revolucionarios.

La clase obrera puede pasar por interminables años y décadas de pasividad, inconsciencia política, desorganizada y aletargada, y, entonces, de repente, en un periodo de tiempo relativamente corto, se despertará, se radicalizará, se organizará y estará lista para cambiar el mundo.

Nos equivocaríamos si no viéramos este potencial en el periodo en el que el mundo está entrando. Las fuerzas revolucionarias del movimiento obrero harían mal en no ver esto y prepararse para ello. La oportunidad de hacerlo es la razón por la que muchos de nosotros nos hicimos comunistas en primer lugar.

### Las lecciones de 2008:

#### ¡La clase obrera debe levantarse esta vez!

Es importante repasar las lecciones de la crisis capitalista de 2008. Esta es la crisis que nos dio la “Gran Recesión”. Esta recesión hizo a los pobres aún más pobres, a los sindicatos más débiles y creó más empleos precarios.

La clase dominante permitió que la primera persona negra llegara a la presidencia, tras la crisis financiera, en parte para asegurarse contra las rebeliones. Una de las principales consecuencias sociales y políticas de la crisis de 2008 es que aceleró lo que es un proceso social global.

Como predijeron Karl Marx y Frederick Engels en el Manifiesto Comunista, la “Gran Recesión” empujó a más jóvenes con estudios universitarios, que pensaban que tendrían una vida cómoda, fuera de la clase media y hacia la clase trabajadora. Durante ese tiempo, los sindicatos celebraron grandes marchas contra los recortes presupuestarios y los despidos, dieron plataformas a los políticos capitalistas para que sonaran militantes, y luego dieron instrucciones a los trabajadores sindicalizados para que volvieran a casa, cuando muchos de nosotros estábamos agitando para que los trabajadores ocuparan las cosas.

Hubo algunas excepciones; en diciembre de 2007,

varios centenares de trabajadores inmigrantes de Chicago ocuparon la fábrica de ventanas que la patronal iba a cerrar. La clase dominante estaba tan preocupada de que la idea de ocupar cosas se pusiera de moda, que envió a banqueros de alto nivel a negociar directamente con los trabajadores.

A principios de 2011, miles de maestros, trabajadores de la educación y trabajadores públicos ocuparon el edificio del capitolio estatal en Madison, Wisconsin, para protestar contra el plan del gobernador de convertir esencialmente el estado en un estado antisindical, de “derecho al trabajo”. Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero apoyó y participó en esta valiente y masiva lucha. La ocupación de Madison debería haber iniciado una ola de ocupaciones de trabajadores en todo el país; los demócratas se aseguraron de que esto no sucediera.

Finalmente, en el otoño de 2011, los jóvenes iniciaron el Movimiento Occupy en la ciudad de Nueva York que se extendió por todo el país. En realidad, el Movimiento Occupy se extendió desde el sur de Europa hasta EE.UU. Los trabajadores estaban intrigados por el Movimiento Occupy.

Pero una vez más, los líderes sindicales y los políticos, que alababan las ocupaciones, trabajaron horas extras para asegurarse de que los trabajadores no siguieran su ejemplo. Y así, se perdió la oportunidad de abrir una lucha obrera masiva y combativa a gran escala.

Después del movimiento Occupy Wall Street, entró en escena el movimiento Black Lives Matter. Este movimiento era en realidad un movimiento de la clase obrera. Sin embargo, no estaba políticamente preparado para declararse como tal. La incapacidad de la clase obrera para afirmarse de forma importante, militante y sostenida sentó en parte las bases para el ascenso de Trump. Debemos luchar como el demonio para asegurarnos de que la clase obrera no pierda la oportunidad de hacerlo esta vez.

### Cómo prepararse para la lucha que se avecina: Un levantamiento de clase

Cómo prepararse para la lucha de clases que va a suponer la crisis económica capitalista es lo más importante a lo que se enfrenta todo el movimiento obrero. Debe considerarse la tarea más seria y consecuente. ¿Qué alianzas son posibles? ¿Qué estrategias deben considerarse?

Determinar esto llevará tiempo y un cuidadoso trabajo. Los revolucionarios y todas las fuerzas que quieran luchar y no dejarse frenar deben estar pensando en ello. En lugar de estos preparativos, el esquema político general de lo que es necesario ya está claro.

Hará falta un movimiento verdaderamente clasista, dirigido por las fuerzas más combativas y revolucionarias. Lo que queremos decir con “de toda la clase” es que los trabajadores más oprimidos deben estar en esta lucha, más que en ella, en su dirección. Los trabajadores inmigrantes deben estar en ella, no solos, como tantas veces, sino con el amplio apoyo de los sindicatos y otras fuerzas y movimientos progresistas.

La lucha contra el racismo no debe ser periférica, sino estar en el centro de esta lucha. Los jóvenes trabajadores que están a la vanguardia de las campañas organizativas en Amazon, Starbucks y Target, y en muchos otros lugares, deben estar en el liderazgo de esta lucha, porque son valientes, radicales y odian el capitalismo.

Este debe ser el tipo de movimiento que impida que los alguaciles desalojen a la gente, que coordine huelgas de trabajadores cada vez más amplias, que ocupe en masa, cuando esté listo, y cierre las cosas con el poder de millones.

Debe ser un movimiento que vaya más allá de las reivindicaciones habituales y plantea la cuestión del control obrero. Debe ser un movimiento de clase que no pueda ser detenido por los demócratas.

Debe ser un movimiento anticapitalista e imposible de domesticar o controlar por los que están realmente en contra. Debe ser antiimperialista, y debe ser un movimiento que se vea a sí mismo, en palabras y en acciones audaces, como parte del despertar de un levantamiento de la clase obrera mundial. Una evolución así sería decisiva y contribuiría a allanar el camino que conduce a la revolución socialista. □



Criminalizados por protestar: Dictan prisión preventiva por 18 meses a dirigentes de Ayacucho. Perú, 16 de febrero, 2023.  
Foto: Valia Aguirre

## Un llamado al movimiento

# Prepárense para la mayor crisis capitalista mundial de la historia

Por Larry Holmes

*El escritor es el Primer Secretario de Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero. Escrito el 19 de octubre de 2022.*

Según el Fondo Monetario Internacional, la mayor parte del mundo, incluidos los EE.UU., está en recesión o se dirige a una recesión, o algo peor, en algún momento en 2023. Todos los indicadores económicos apuntan a una grave contracción económica. Las empresas se ven obligadas a alquilar cada vez más espacio de almacén para almacenar todos los ordenadores, televisores, muebles y otras cosas que los trabajadores no pueden permitirse comprar.

Este no es una recesión económica normal. Por muy larga y prolongada que sea esta crisis económica y por muchos acontecimientos que la empujen hacia adelante, es el desarrollo que muchos marxistas (así como banqueros y multimillonarios dispuestos a pronunciar palabras de verdad) consideran la mayor crisis económica capitalista mundial de la historia. La crisis capitalista en curso es única en el sentido de que es sintomática de un sistema moribundo que entra en su fase final.

### La Reserva Federal declara la guerra a los trabajadores y oprimidos del mundo

La Reserva Federal está cerrando la economía con subidas de las tasas de interés, no por confianza o porque tengan un plan real. Es algo que la Reserva Federal está haciendo por pánico. Es algo que están haciendo porque se han quedado sin ninguna otra alternativa; y así, en un intento desesperado por salvar el capitalismo estadounidense, están abriendo las puertas del infierno. Wall Street piensa que los trabajadores que viven de cheque en cheque y que no pueden pagar sus facturas son inflacionistas.

El Banco de la Reserva Federal, (BRF) el banco al que todos los demás bancos centrales siguen o por el que se ponen el línea, ha declarado la guerra a los trabajadores y a los pueblos oprimidos del mundo. El BRF está subiendo los tipos de interés, más rápido que en ningún otro momento, para forzar esencialmente el despido de tantos trabajadores como sea posible, hacer subir la tasa de desempleo, así como bajar los salarios de los trabajadores, y ayudar a empresas como Amazon y Starbucks a destruir a los sindicatos.

Debido a lo que los banqueros están haciendo, los trabajadores se arriesgan a perder sus hogares ya sea por desalojo o ejecución hipotecaria, perder sus pensiones, tener sus coches embargados y ser incapaces de proporcionar alimentos a sus familias. La guerra del Banco de la Reserva Federal no se limita a los trabajadores de Estados Unidos.

Es un ataque contra los trabajadores y los pueblos oprimidos de todo el mundo. El imperialismo estadounidense está armando una vez más uno de los garrotes que le quedan a un imperio en ruinas sobre el mundo. El dólar estadounidense sigue siendo, en efecto, la moneda del mundo en virtud de la fuerza económica y militar del imperialismo estadounidense. El 90% de todo el comercio mundial se realiza en dólares estadounidenses.

El aumento de los tipos de interés fortalece el dólar frente a cualquier otra moneda, encareciendo los alimentos y los productos básicos en todo el mundo. Los

trabajadores pagarán mucho más por una barra de pan en Italia o por los comestibles en España. Pero los más perjudicados serán los más pobres, que viven donde vive el 85% de la población del planeta, en el Sur Global.

Lo que está haciendo la Reserva Federal podría cuadruplicar el coste de los alimentos y las medicinas en la mayoría de los países de África o en lugares como Pakistán o Perú. Son zonas del mundo donde el hambre ya es una crisis. Esto provocará que los países más pobres dejen de pagar su deuda al FMI, haciendo la vida

y la supervivencia mucho más difíciles.

Esto va a provocar revueltas sociales, la caída de gobiernos y revoluciones.

Los que vivimos en el centro del imperialismo mundial, aquí en EE.UU., tenemos la obligación especial de fomentar alianzas de clase con los más pobres de nuestra clase global. Este objetivo debe ocupar un lugar muy destacado en la agenda del movimiento obrero en EE.UU. No se basa en la lástima o el paternalismo, sino en el objetivo de

realizar el internacionalismo revolucionario. Si la crisis capitalista permite a la clase obrera avanzar en esta línea,acerca al mundo entero a la revolución socialista.

### Crisis en ciernes desde hace mucho, mucho tiempo

A parte de las razones que la clase capitalista da para cualquier crisis económica capitalista —razones que son superficiales, confusas y rotundamente falsas— las causas fundamentales son tanto históricas como contemporáneas. Las catástrofes económicas capitalistas no sólo se repiten, sino que empeoran. Lo que antes se consideraban crisis cíclicas dan paso a una crisis sistemática que puede retrasarse, incluso ocultarse durante un tiempo, pero que ya no puede detenerse realmente.

A medida que la magnitud de la sobreproducción capitalista crece exponencialmente con los grandes cambios en las fuerzas productivas de la economía, cada crisis capitalista subsiguiente se hace más amplia, peor, más global y más difícil de controlar. La nueva tecnología de la era digital ha convertido la crisis de sobreproducción capitalista en una característica permanente del capitalismo.

Las asombrosas nuevas generaciones de tecnología que hacen que el mundo sea más pequeño, esté más conectado, y que deberían hacer que el hambre, la falta de vivienda, la pobreza y la necesidad fueran cosa del pasado, bajo el capitalismo tienden a hacer a los ricos más ricos y a todos los demás más pobres. La pandemia puso de manifiesto que el capitalismo es un sistema que perjudica activamente a la sociedad, bloquea el progreso y el desarrollo social y supone una amenaza inmediata y existencial para la vida del planeta.

Esta es la razón por la que tantos jóvenes trabajadores están desmoralizados y llenos de desesperanza. La inseguridad económica y el armagedón climático capitalista han convencido a muchos de que no tienen futuro. Todos debemos trabajar duro para convertir esta desesperanza en rabia revolucionaria anticapitalista que alimente la lucha de clases.

### ¿No debería ser esta crisis la cuestión principal para la clase obrera?

Cómo prepararse para esta crisis económica capitalista debería ser el debate principal entre los que se consideran marxistas; pensar lo contrario sería contrario a la teoría marxista revolucionaria. En la medida en que esta crisis aún no se ha convertido en la principal prioridad

de la izquierda es un reflejo de la debilidad ideológica, política y organizativa de la izquierda y del movimiento obrero. Los reveses y las pérdidas durante un largo periodo de tiempo han tendido a debilitar a las fuerzas más revolucionarias y a reforzar a las fuerzas reformistas y socialdemócratas más numerosas.

En muchos círculos de izquierda, se considera que hablar de crisis capitalista que lleve a la revolución es un error demostrado por la historia, y hablar de revolución se considera poco realista en el mejor de los casos.

Por desgracia, estas nociones facilitan que un sector de la clase dominante capitalista, como el Partido Demócrata en Estados Unidos, controle a la clase obrera y la mantenga atada a los intereses de la clase capitalista.

La crisis económica mundial que se desarrolla ante nosotros va a cambiar todo esto. Ya hemos visto a jóvenes trabajadores radicales insuflar nueva vida a la clase obrera con campañas de organización que están transformando el viejo movimiento obrero tradicional. El socialismo ya es más popular que nunca, y esta crisis capitalista va a hacer estallar las filas de los militantes anticapitalistas.

### Por qué toda la economía capitalista está sentada sobre la mayor burbuja de deuda... de la historia

Hoy en día, toda la economía capitalista mundial está sentada sobre la mayor burbuja de deuda de la historia. Algunos creen que la burbuja de la deuda podría ser tan grande como 10 o incluso 20 veces el tamaño de la economía mundial capitalista! En muchos sentidos, es la crisis de la deuda lo que más horroriza a los capitalistas. Lo único que asusta más a la clase dominante capitalista es la perspectiva de que la clase obrera se levante y haga la revolución socialista.

¿Cómo ha ocurrido esto? A medida que la crisis de sobreproducción capitalista ha ido privando cada vez más a los ricos de sus deseados márgenes de beneficio, el sistema capitalista empezó a dejar de dar prioridad a la fabricación y venta de cosas como única fuente de obtención de beneficios. El capitalismo se ha vuelto cada vez más dependiente de la manipulación del capital financiero para satisfacer su codicia.

Por eso los bancos han pasado a desempeñar el papel dominante en la economía capitalista mundial, junto con los mercados financieros. Para qué producir cosas que la gente pueda usar cuando puedes enriquecerse prestando o invirtiendo y comerciando y comprando acciones, bonos y las innumerables otras formas en que el capitalismo financiero comercia con papel y deudas, mientras el nivel de vida de la clase trabajadora cae en picada.

Fidel Castro dijo una vez que, en lugar de satisfacer las necesidades reales de la sociedad, el capitalismo había convertido la economía mundial en un gigantesco casino de Las Vegas.

El problema con el capitalismo "casino" es que, como en cualquier esquema Ponzi, al final sólo puede haber unos pocos ganadores, y todos los demás quedan muy, muy endeudados.

La creación de una deuda inimaginable y en su mayor parte oculta es una característica fundamental de un sistema dominado por el capital financiero. Hace catorce años, ocurrió algo que hizo que la crisis de la deuda capitalista fuera un millón de veces peor.

El crack financiero mundial de 2008 comenzó con el colapso del negocio de los préstamos hipotecarios, parte integrante del sistema financiero capitalista. Por supuesto, los millones de trabajadores que perdieron sus hogares no fueron rescatados. Sin embargo, el sistema financiero, menos algunos actores como Lehman Brothers y Bear Stearns, sí lo fue. Antes de que el daño fuera parcial y temporalmente contenido por algunas de las medidas más extraordinarias de la historia del sistema capitalista, todo el sistema financiero mundial se

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